

Appendix 3D

Metadata Development Questions

Questions Metadata Should Answer:

Introduction--This document provides a general interview approach for creating metadata. It is not necessarily exhaustive but is intended to convey in plain language the basic information that will be contained in the metadata and link to pages specifying the steps required to write that information into the metadata document itself. Questions in *italics* indicate the topics and are not to be answered explicitly; those that are in plain text, indented beneath them are the questions that need to be answered.

The Questions:

1. *What does the dataset describe?*
 - a. What is the title of the dataset?
 - b. What geographic area does the dataset cover?
 - c. Does the dataset describe conditions during a particular time period?
 - d. Is this a digital map or remote-sensing image, or something different like tabular data?
 - e. *How does the dataset **represent** geographic features?*
 - 1) How are geographic features stored in the dataset?
 - 2) What coordinate system is used to represent geographic features?
 - f. *How does the dataset **describe** geographic features?*
 - 1) What are the types of features present?
 - 2) For each feature, what attributes of these features are described?
 - 3) What sort of values does each attribute hold?
 - 4) For measured attributes, what are the units of measure, resolution of the measurements, frequency of the measurements in time, and estimated accuracy of the measurements?
2. *Who produced the dataset?*
 - a. Who created the dataset?
 - 1) Formal authors of the published work
 - 2) Compilers and editors who converted the work to digital form
 - 3) Technical specialists who did some of the processing but aren't listed as formal authors
 - 4) Cooperators, collaborators, funding agencies, and other contributors who deserve mention
 - b. To whom should users address questions about the data?
3. *Why was the dataset created?*
 - a. What were the objectives of the research that resulted in this dataset?

- b. What objectives are served by presenting the data in digital form?
 - c. How do you recommend that the data be used?
 - d. Are you concerned that non-specialists might misinterpret the data? If so, of what aspects of the dataset should they be especially wary?
4. *How was the dataset created?*
- a. From what previous works were the data drawn?
 - 1) Are the source data original observations made by the authors and their cooperators?
 - 2) Were parts of the data previously packaged in a publication or distributed informally?
 - 3) Were the source data published?
 - 4) Were the source data compiled at a particular scale?
 - 5) What time period do the source data represent?
 - 6) What information was obtained from each data source?
 - b. How were the data generated, processed, and modified?
 - 1) How were the data collected, handled, or processed?
 - 2) For this activity did you use data from some other source?
 - 3) Did this activity generate an intermediate data product that stands on its own?
 - 4) When did this processing occur?
 - 5) Did someone other than the formal authors do the data processing?
 - c. What similar or related data should the user be aware of?
5. *How reliable are the data; what problems remain in the dataset?*
- a. What can you say about the accuracy of the observations?
 - b. How accurately are the geographic locations known?
 - c. If data vary in depth or height, how accurately is vertical position known?
 - d. Where are the gaps in the data? What is missing there?
 - e. Do the observations mean the same thing throughout the dataset?
6. *How can someone get a copy of the dataset?*
- a. Are there legal restrictions on access or use of the data?
 - b. Who distributes the data?
 - c. What is the distributor's name or number for this dataset?
 - d. As a distributor, what legal disclaimers do you want users to read?
 - e. *How can people download or order the data?*
 - 1) In what formats are the data available?

- 2) Can users download the data from the network?
- 3) Can users get the data on disk or tape?
- 4) Is there a fee to get the data?
- 5) How long will it take to get the data?
- f. What hardware or software do people need in order to use the dataset?
- g. Will these data be available for only a limited time?
- 7. [*Who wrote the metadata?*](#)
 - a. When were the metadata last modified?
 - b. Has this metadata record been reviewed or will it be reviewed in the future?
 - c. Who wrote the metadata?
 - d. To what standard are the metadata intended to conform?
 - e. If you specified any clock times in the metadata, did you use local time, GMT, or something else?
 - f. Are there legal restrictions on who can get or use the metadata?

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This file is <<http://geology.usgs.gov/tools/metadata/tools/doc/ctc/>>

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